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14. ABSTRACT Somalia is currently poised to enter its third decade as a failed state. Despite financial and military support from the international community, the current national government is besieged in Mogadishu by Islamic militias allied with al Qaeda. While southern Somalia has been in the world spotlight northern Somalia has quietly been enjoying decades of comparably prosperous and peaceful existence. The northern half of Somalia is comprised of two autonomous and peaceful regions, Somaliland and Puntland. These regions have enjoyed two decades of democracy and progress and they have done so without the benefits of international recognition. Should the current government in Mogadishu fall Puntland and Somaliland will likely come under intense military pressure from al Shabaab militias. Because Somaliland and Puntland have the potential to develop into stable democratic bulwarks against growing Islamic extremism in the Horn of Africa, the US should be prepared to abandon the idea of a unified Somalia and back the efforts of these regions in their quest for independence and autonomy by providing diplomatic, economic and military support.					
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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

A SOMALI SPLIT?

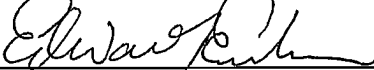
Is it time for the US to abandon the idea of a unified Somalia and recognize the breakaway regions of Somaliland and Puntland?

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MAJ BARTON K. NAGLE

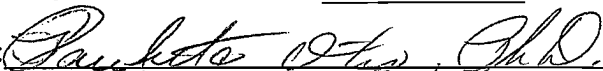
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Executive Summary

Title: A Somali Split? Is it time for the US to abandon the idea of a unified Somalia and recognize the breakaway regions of Somaliland and Puntland?

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Thesis: Because Somaliland and Puntland have the potential to develop into stable democratic bulwarks against growing Islamic extremism in the Horn of Africa, the US should be prepared to abandon the idea of a unified Somalia and back the efforts of these regions in their quest for independence and autonomy by providing diplomatic, economic and military support.

Discussion: Somalia is currently poised to enter its third decade as a failed state. Despite financial and military support from the international community the current national government is besieged in Mogadishu by Islamic militias allied with al Qaeda. Since coming to power in January 2009 the Transitional Federal Government has controlled only a few dozen blocks of central Mogadishu and there is no indication of progress in the near future. While southern Somalia has been in the world spotlight, hopelessly trapped in unending violence from ever-shifting militia warfare, northern Somalia has quietly been enjoying decades of comparably prosperous and peaceful existence. The northern half of Somalia is comprised of two autonomous and peaceful regions, Somaliland and Puntland. These regions have enjoyed two decades of democracy and progress and they have done so without the benefits of international recognition. Should the current government in Mogadishu fall or negotiate a truce with the Islamic militias, Puntland and Somaliland will likely come under intense military pressure from these al Shabaab militias.

Conclusion: The US should recognize Somaliland as an independent nation and Puntland as an autonomous region and should engage them diplomatically, economically and militarily in order to improve living conditions and prevent the spread of militant Islam from southern Somalia.

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Preface

2010 will mark Somalia's 19th year as a failed state, the longest running example in the post-colonial world. Despite significant financial and military support from the international community the current national government is besieged in Mogadishu by Islamic militias allied with al Qaeda. Since coming to power in January 2009 the Government has controlled only a few dozen blocks of central Mogadishu and there is no indication of progress in the near future. While southern Somalia's unending violence has occupied the world spotlight, northern Somalia has quietly enjoyed decades of a comparably prosperous and peaceful existence. The northern half of Somalia is comprised of two autonomous regions, Somaliland and Puntland. These regions have enjoyed two decades of democracy and progress and they have done so without the benefits of international recognition. Should the latest national government in Mogadishu fall or negotiate a truce with the Islamic militias it is now fighting, Puntland and Somaliland will likely be the next targets of the Islamists. Because Somaliland and Puntland have the potential to develop into stable democratic bulwarks against growing Islamic extremism in the Horn of Africa, the US should be prepared to abandon the idea of a unified Somalia and back the efforts of these regions for independence and autonomy by providing diplomatic, economic and military support.

A Somali Split?



Figure 1: Somaliland Times; 20 Jan 2007; accessed 15 February 2010 at http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.somalilandtimes.net/sl/2006/261/somaliland%2520%26%2520puntland.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.somalilandtimes.net/sl/2006/261/01.shtml&usg=__HCCdenmAH

Section 1: Somalia a hopelessly failed state?

The Transitional Federal Government:

Somalia's latest national government was formed in January 2009 at the conclusion of a failed two-year occupation by Ethiopia that overthrew the militant Islamic Courts Union (ICU) government. This incursion by Ethiopia was quietly backed by the United States and was an effort to prevent a militant Islamic government from coming to power in Somalia. The outgoing Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was dominated by a branch of the Darod Clan from the northern Puntland region and was supported by Ethiopia. The new TFG emerged from internationally sponsored negotiations in Djibouti and is dominated by clans from South-central Somalia that formed a coalition with moderate remnants of the ICU. Dominated by moderate Islamists, this new TFG has the support of the UN, the African Union (AU) and the rest of the international community including the United States. The TFG is kept in power by 8,000 AU peacekeepers securing key points in Mogadishu. The TFG receives funding and weapons from the international community including 80 tons of small arms and ammunition from the US¹.

The Islamic threat:

The TFG is locked in a military stalemate with hard-line Islamic militias that split off from the ICU. Its main opposition comes from al Shabaab, an al Qaeda backed Islamic militia that operates outside of Somalia's traditional clan organizations. Al Shabaab and their Islamist clan-based allies such as Hizbul-Islam control most of Southern and Central Somalia. Their near-term objective is to drive the AU peacekeepers from Somalia and overthrow the TFG. If successful, indications are al Shabaab would likely direct its forces north towards Puntland and

Somaliland. Unlike Hizbul-Islam, the leadership of Al Shabaab is comprised largely of foreigners reportedly dispatched by al Qaeda in Yemen. In a 2010 statement al Shabaab publically indicated their allegiance to al Qaeda and their intent to destabilize the entire region saying: " *jihad of Horn of Africa must be combined with the international jihad led by the al-Qaeda network*".² Multiple open-source reporting suggests al Qaeda has increased their presence in Somalia since the 2008 withdrawal of Ethiopian forces and have established training camps to train fighters for missions throughout the Horn of Africa and beyond. Media reporting suggest dozens of US based Somalis traveled to Somalia in 2009 to attend these training camps³. The FBI and DHS are reportedly alert for their return fearing they may attempt to conduct attacks inside the US. While attacks inside the US are a possibility attacks inside Puntland and Somaliland are already a reality as demonstrated by the 29 October 2009 suicide bombing of a Puntland Intelligence Service office in Bosasso by US Citizen Shirwa Ahmed of Minneapolis.⁴

Section 2: Introduction to Northern Somalia

Somalia came into existence in 1960 with the voluntary unification of former British Somalia in the northwest and Italian Somalia in the northeast and south. Prior to this Somaliland had been an independent nation for five days. The leaders of the new state of Somalia saw unification as a first step to forming a greater Somalia that would eventually unite all ethnic Somalis including those residing in Northern Kenya, Eastern Ethiopia and Djibouti. In 1969, after several years of ineffectual clan-based parliamentary democracy Mohammed Said Barre came to power in a coup. Initially backed by the Soviets, Barre embarked on a military build-up in order to unite all Somalis in the region. His efforts culminated in the disastrous 1977-78 border war with Ethiopia

to regain the ethnic-Somali Ogaden region. This defeat marked the end of a unified Somalia as multiple clan-based opposition groups began 13-years of insurrection across Somalia. The Barre regime responded to the insurrection with unrestrained ferocity that lasted until the collapse of the regime in 1991 and the rise of warlordism and anarchy in the south.

In former British Somaliland members of the dominant Issac clan bore the brunt of the government attacks with 20,000 killed throughout the 1980's. After the fall of the Barre regime in 1991 the Issac clan declared the territory of the former British Somaliland independent from Somalia and created the Republic of Somaliland (RS) with boundaries that corresponded to the original British protectorate. Since declaring independence Somaliland has rejected all contact with Somalia.

In northeast Somalia the Majerteen sub clan of the Harti-Darod clan attempted to distance itself from the chaos of Southern Somali and established the Puntland State of Somalia (PSS) along their clan boundaries. The Puntland government has never openly advocated secession; rather they see themselves as the leading state in a future federated Somalia, but they do exercise de facto independence. For example, they conduct joint security operations with Ethiopia and they have entered into trade agreements with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Most significantly they are engaged in independent negotiations with foreign business entities for investment to develop their natural resources and infrastructure.

Since declaring independence in the case of Somaliland and autonomy in the case of Puntland, both regions have operated democratic governments and insulated themselves from the unending anarchy of the south. While the international community does not recognize Somaliland or Puntland as independent states, both regions have the potential to become viable nations. The

African Union (AU) has a long-standing policy that post colonial boundaries should remain intact to avoid opening a Pandora's Box of successions on the continent⁵. The AU has cited this as a justification for denying recognition of Somaliland despite that Somaliland voluntarily joined Italian Somalia after a brief period of independence.

Section 3: State Viability

Based on vague standards in international law there is nothing to disqualify either Somaliland or Puntland from becoming independent states. There is no international standard to determine the legitimacy much less the viability of a potential state. The closest internationally recognized agreement to determine the qualifications of a state is the 1933 Montevideo Convention, considered customary international law. Signed by the states of the Americas including the United States, the treaty outlines four criteria for statehood:

Article 1 "The state as a person of international law should poses the following qualifications: a) a permanent population; b) a defined territory; c) a government and d) capacity to enter into relations with the other state"⁶

While there are no legal obstacles to independence, there are practical requirements to become a viable state; chief among these is the existence of a sense of national identity among the people, a viable economy and a functioning political system that the people have confidence in⁷.

Section 4: Somaliland as a Viable State?

Somaliland's Population and National Identity?

Somaliland has territorial integrity with boundaries that are identical to that of the former British Somaliland. Bounded by Djibouti to the West and Ethiopia to the South these international borders are not in question. There is a dispute along the eastern border with the Puntland. Along this border, Somaliland's eastern districts of Sool and Sanaag are contested. Violence erupted between Puntland and Somaliland over these regions in 2003 and again in 2007. The dispute stems from divisions within the local populations of these districts, which are comprised of sub-clans of the Harti-Darod clan with clan ties to Puntland. Somaliland troops currently control these border regions but Puntland still claims them. Residents within the districts are split in their loyalties. The resolution of this dispute would likely be a prerequisite to any international recognition of Somaliland.

Somaliland has a population of 2.5-3 million and is comprised of three clan groups⁸. The Issaq Clan occupies the center of the country and makes up 66% of the population⁹. Historically the dominant clan; they were the most active opponents of the Said Barre regime and led the push for independence from Somalia in 1991. The Darod/Harti clans occupy the eastern portion of the territory along the Puntland border and make up 19% of the population. Past supporters of the Barre regime, these clans have been the least supportive of independence¹⁰. The Dir occupy the western border region and are full participants in the Somaliland political process. Somali is the universal language across all of Somalia. The Shafi school of Sunni Islam dominates Somaliland. Apart from the alienation felt by some in the Sool and Sanaag regions, the people of Somaliland demonstrate a sense of "common values and trust between the northern clans"¹¹.

This sense of national identity was best demonstrated in the 2001 referendum vote to endorse the Somaliland Constitution that received support of 97% of the electorate¹².

Economic Potential

While Somaliland compares with the poorest nations in the world economically they are on par with their neighbors in the region and there is potential for significant near-term improvement if they were treated as a nation by international investors. Somaliland's 2008 GDP was USD600 million dollars¹³. Somaliland's per capita income is USD240 annually. This is slightly below Ethiopia at USD280 per capita (ranked 205th in the world) and well below Djibouti at USD1,130 per capita (ranked 159th in the world)¹⁴. These figures do not account for remittances from abroad that account for between USD200-500 million annually.

Livestock is the backbone of the economy supporting 60% of the population. Recent investment in infrastructure is expected to double livestock exports that now account for almost half of the GDP or about USD250 million annually¹⁵. The Somaliland export industry has been devastated by an 11-year Saudi ban on livestock imports over fears of Rift Valley disease. The UN estimates the ban may have reduced the Somaliland GDP by 40%¹⁶. Saudi Arabia lifted this ban in November 2009 after the completion of a Saudi –funded quarantine facility at the main port of Berbera. Recent press reporting suggests there has since been a 10-fold increase in livestock being exported thorough the port. Livestock keepers are reporting a 100% increase in price per head¹⁷.

Somalia as a whole may be losing USD94 million in potential fishing revenue to illegal commercial fishing¹⁸. With approximately 450miles of coast, Somaliland makes up roughly

1/4th of Somalia's coastline. There are currently no domestic industrial fishing vessels operating from Somaliland and no foreign fishing contracts or agreements are in place. There is one operational cannery which exports USD1million in shark fin to Asia. The current undeveloped fishing industry in Somaliland harvests only 1,500 tons per year, most for domestic consumption. Fishing contributes just 2% to the GNP. The current harvest is about 10% of the 1991 pre-war levels of 15,000 tons. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimate that 40,000 tons per year could be harvested from Somaliland waters in a sustainable manner¹⁹. This is a potential increase of 73% and would add USD 9million to the USD600million GDP.

Based on pre-1991 exploration Somaliland has the potential for significant revenue from oil. Foreign oil firms were forced to abandon surveys after the fall of the Barre regime, but there has been renewed interest in exploration²⁰. Again, the reoccurring economic handicap that Somaliland faces is the reluctance of foreign firms to sign contracts with the Hargeysa government due to uncertainty about its legal status.

Somaliland has the potential for significant income as a port of entry for goods entering Ethiopia. A former Soviet navy base, the port of Berbera is Somaliland's primary port but has been long stripped of much of its infrastructure. The deep-water port was an occasional port of call to the USS Enterprise in the 1980's. Berbera has six berths and is capable of handling 660 meters vessels with a draft of 9-12 meters but lacks cargo handling cranes²¹. Ethiopian cargo makes up 30-50% of the traffic coming thru, most in the form of international relief. Ethiopia increasingly looks to Berbera as an alternative port for its commercial traffic since losing access to the coast with the secession of Eritrea in 1991. Djibouti has previously had a monopoly on port traffic for landlocked Ethiopia and charges prices accordingly. 2009 Press reporting indicates the French logistics company Bolloré Africa Logistics may be prepared to invest 500million Euros to

improve Berbera and create a suitable corridor into the interior of Africa²². The EU has also indicated it was prepared to invest USD 4.2 million to improve aid corridors across the Somaliland-Ethiopia border²³. Again Somaliland's breakaway status hinders foreign investor confidence.

The Government of Somaliland (GOS)

Following a brief inter-Issac clan war after independence, in 1993 Somaliland's clans agreed to form a shared government²⁴. They created a clan-based western-style representative government with an executive, an independent judiciary and a bicameral legislature nominated by an electoral college of clan elders. This initial government was to be in place for only three years but remained until 2008. During this period Somaliland enjoyed stability and a functioning government evolved with ministries and a civil service that collects taxes as well as a central bank and a national currency. In 2001 a national constitution was adopted and the clan-based government was replaced with a three-party democracy. Subsequent polls elected a (non Issac) president and in 2005 elected a House of Representatives. These elections demonstrated a legitimate democratic process with 1.3 million ballots cast in 982 polling stations with 700 domestic and 76 foreign observers²⁵. Challenges to the narrow presidential election results were settled in the courts. While these elections demonstrated the capacity for democracy, there remain accusations of corruption and procedural disputes. Presidential elections scheduled for 2009 have been repeatedly delayed with the upper house granting multiple extensions. This general election is now scheduled for April 2010 and 700,000 voters are expected to

participate.²⁶ The US and EU are providing monitors and are funding most of the election costs²⁷.

The Government of Somaliland is a functioning government and is improving its services but still struggles with the poverty that grips the entire region. According to the Somaliland Ministry of Finance the 2008-9 federal budget was USD51 Million. Due to the uncertain legal status of the GOS it cannot obtain IMF loans and it therefore does not run a deficit. In 2003 the Ministry of Finance reported a USD 3.2 million surplus.

Education in Somaliland is comparable to neighboring countries. The Ministry of Education reports the number of schools increased from 150 in 1996 to 400 in 2003 with a 2003 student population of 105,000 males and females²⁸. This number includes 3 universities that enrolled 700 students. Three per cent of Somaliland's 3.5million people are enrolled in school compared with 4.5% in Eritrea²⁹.

Medical services are rudimentary but are also improving. In 2003 Somaliland was served by approximately 59 medical facilities with 1600 beds and 90 doctors. The ratio of doctors to population is 1:38,000; comparable to Ethiopia (1:48,000) and Eritrea (1:33,000). The average life expectancy in Somaliland is 52.5 years; above the Somalia-wide average of 49.63 but below Eritrea at 61.78yrs and Ethiopia at 55.41yrs³⁰. Medical services in rural Somaliland are virtually non-existent and the GOS has demonstrated a lack of capacity to maintain facilities handed over by INGOs³¹.

Somaliland maintains relatively effective security services that incorporate all major clans although units appear organized generally along clan lines³². Such internal division along clan lines represents a danger to the security services in the event of clan-based disputes violence. As

seen in southern Somalia, incursions by Islamic militias will likely attempt to exploit clan tensions. Somaliland's 2008 security budget was USD7.8 million. By comparison Djibouti spent USD21million³³. Somaliland maintains a 7,000 man regular army with another 13-50,000 lightly armed clan militiamen that could be mobilized for local area security³⁴. The Army maintains a few dozen captured T-55s tanks and BRDM-2 armored cars and artillery. It has no air capability. The Somaliland Police force is 3,000 strong but few have training or uniforms. Despite this they have proven effective at countering militant Islamist terrorist infiltrations from the south³⁵. The Somaliland Navy operates six fast attack craft and maintains a cooperative relationship with Djibouti in combating piracy. Piracy has not been a significant problem off Somaliland apart from two incidences in 2009 around Laasqoray near the Puntland border³⁶. The Somaliland Navy operates its own maritime college at Berbera which trains 100 officers per year to International Maritime Bureau standards³⁷.

The major threat to Somali security comes from the Islamic militias operating in southern Somalia. They are unlikely to tolerate a secular democratic government in Somaliland and may use reunification as a thinly veiled excuse to legitimize attacks. Al Shabaab has stated their intent to unify all of Somalia under an Islamic government. The ongoing conflict in the south has restricted their efforts inside Somaliland to isolated terror attacks but they have carried out nine attacks inside Somaliland since 2003. The most significant attack occurred in October 2009 when three suicide car bombs struck separate targets in the Somaliland capitol Hargeysa killing 19. The attacks were conducted on the office of the President, the Ethiopian consulate and the UN Development Program office. Much of the recent activity has occurred in the contested Sool region on the Puntland border. Al Shabaab fighters are reported to have joined with Dhulbahante clan separatist operating in the main city Laas Caanood³⁸. They are blamed for a November

2009 roadside bomb attack that killed the commander of the Somaliland 12th Division. The addition of a militant Islamist threat to this already tense and potentially oil-rich region will be a significant challenge for Somaliland security services in the coming years. \

Section 5: Puntland as a Viable State?

Puntland's National Identity?

Puntland identity is based on its clans. In 1998 the dominant Majerteen-Harti-Darod clan of NE Somalia sought to distance itself from the chaos of the South and declared itself an autonomous region; the Puntland State of Somalia (PSS). Unlike Somaliland, the boundaries of the PSS are not clearly defined. The southern boundary is unmarked by any geographic or political boundary and as mentioned; the border with Somaliland is disputed. Historically the Puntland region was divided along sub-clan lines into three sultanates within the Harti clan confederation. The Harti confederation is comprised of the Marjerteen in the east and central region, the Dhulbahnte to the south and the Warsangeli in the northwest. These sub-clans participate in the government.

Unlike Somaliland, Puntland was never an independent state or geographic entity. In mid 1920's the region, along with southern Somalia, was conquered and became part of Italian Somaliland³⁹. Article I of Puntland's transitional constitution indicates that Puntland is part of an anticipated future federal state of Somalia. It does not seek to secede from Somalia but ongoing anarchy in the south and the potential for oil revenue may change this⁴⁰.

Puntland's Economic Potential

Puntland's GDP is estimated to be \$600 million with per capita income estimated between USD150-300⁴¹. With no official figures assessing the GDP of Puntland is difficult. Being generally at peace, the standard of living is considered significantly better than in southern Somalia. As in Somaliland, remittances from Somali's abroad exceed the GDP. Jane's estimates remittances coming into Puntland may be as much as USD 1 billion⁴². The extensive people smuggling activity in the main Bosasso Port may contribute to this large amount.

The livestock industry dominates Puntland's economy, comprising 80% of the export market, 60% of the GDP and provides 60% of the area's employment opportunities⁴³. In November 2009 Saudi Arabia lifted its 9- year ban on Somali livestock. This will significantly improve the Puntland economy as livestock exports are expected to now double⁴⁴. Puntland is responsible for 60% of the livestock exported to the Middle East⁴⁵

With 550mi of coastline (excluding Sanaag) and rich currents fishing is Puntlands second most important industry. In 2006 Puntland exported only 408 tons of fish. A 2005 World Bank report estimates that Puntland's annual catch has never exceeded 7% of its sustainable potential⁴⁶. The potential annual output for Puntland is reportedly 180,000 tons⁴⁷. Shortfalls in processing and cold storage capacity as well as the absence of industrial fishing vessels prevent Puntland fishermen from fully exploiting their fisheries potential. Unlicensed industrial fishing activity is rampant along Puntlands Indian Ocean coast, which is one of the five best fishing grounds in the world. In a 2005 report, the UN FAO estimated that there were 700 foreign trawlers and processors operating illegally in Somali waters generating USD94 million in revenue for their owners. Most of these vessels will be found off of the rich fishing grounds off Puntland.

The port city of Bosasso is Puntland's only commercial port. The small shallow-water port has limited capabilities seeing mostly dhow traffic. Despite this, Bosasso is the main point of export for livestock bound for the Middle East. The port's main berth is 170meters and 9 meters deep⁴⁸. There is no significant cargo handling infrastructure. In 2009 the Italian engineering firm CORMIO tendered a contract to improve the alongside facilities. This firm also constructed a 1,766meter asphalt runway at Bosasso's small international airport in 2008⁴⁹. Bosasso is the primary point of departure for roughly 30,000 HOA migrants smuggled to the Arabian Peninsula annually. This situation has produced a significant criminal presence and provides some cover for foreign terrorists to enter HOA from Yemen and Pakistan.

Oil exploration in Puntland has been a controversial issue since 2005 when Australian companies Consort Private Ltd and Range Resources signed a deal with the Puntland government for rights to potentially lucrative oil fields in the Nugaal and Dharoor valleys stretching into Somaliland. These deals have sparked frequent protest from the Transitional Federal Government which challenges Puntland's right to enter into international agreements, as the PSS is not Somalia's national government. Despite this, Puntland's parliament ratified amendments in December 2009 that will allow drilling to commence in mid-2010⁵⁰. There is an estimated 500 million barrels of recoverable oil in these valleys based on exploration conducted by Conoco in the mid-1990s⁵¹. At USD80 per barrel that translates into USD40 Billion. In 2008 the Canadian oil consultants Sparool Associates reviewed the Conaco data and revised the estimate up to a possible 10.4 billion barrels of oil that may be available⁵². The Nugaal and Dharoor fields are only 100-200 miles from Bosasso and are connected by the main North-South road to Southern Somalia.

Puntland's Government

Puntland operates under an interim constitution organized around clans rather than parties. The government is comprised of an executive, a legislative and a judicial branch. The legislative House of Representatives made up of 66 seats that are allotted to the three sub-clans with members approved by the traditional clan leaders. The House of Representatives appoints the President. Since 1998 the Puntland legislature has peacefully chosen four presidents including the current President Abdirahaman Farole. After nine years of negotiations the final draft of the Puntland constitution was unveiled in May 2009. It is scheduled to receive final approval from the president and then be put up for a popular vote in 2010. Once approved, the government will transition to a popularly elected three party system. The exhaustive negotiations surrounding the constitution were closely followed by the local press and people of Puntland. The process is credited with creating a sense of participation and trust that the government is taking into account all segments of society.

The 2005 PSS reported revenues of USD92.5 million dollars. Expenditures were slightly below this, indicating a lack of deficit spending⁵³. The Ministry of finance reports 73% of the Governments income was due to import and export duties. As with Somaliland, the lack of major foreign investment is preventing deficits. Unlike Somaliland, the PSS still uses the Somali Shilling as its currency.

The Education system in Puntland is comparable to their neighbors. Roughly 30% of primary school age children are able to attend school, with community revenue providing three times what government revenues cover⁵⁴. Common to the region, public schools typically rely on student fees.

Puntland has rudimentary medical services but they are comparable to their neighbors in the region. The MOH reports that as of 2004 there were 536 hospital beds and 62 doctors. the ratio of doctor to individuals is 1:40,000⁵⁵. The average life expectancy in 2004 was 49. Overwhelmingly medical services are concentrated in towns. The rural populations have almost no services.

Puntland Security services are able to provide basic security in the populated areas and along main roads. The Puntland Army is 3,000 strong but is manned by former tribal militia with little training. It operates heavy technical vehicles and utilizes typical weapons seen throughout Somalia but has no armored vehicle or air capability.

The Puntland Police Force is active in populated areas. It receives support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) under the UN Rule of Law and Security Program⁵⁶. Prior to 2009 the Police were not paid regularly and exhibited very poor record keeping and overall performance. After the 2009 election, newly elected President Farole instituted a restructuring and began regular payment of salaries⁵⁷.

The Puntland Coastguard has approximately 300 men and eight patrol boats which operate exclusively out of Bosasso. Their operations are limited to the coastal Gulf of Aden. Tasked primarily with fisheries enforcement, the Coast Guard was funded initially thru fines on foreign vessels involved in illegal fishing. This practice led to abuses and evolved into today's piracy problem in Somalia. Beginning in 2008 the Puntland Government demonstrated an eagerness to confront the piracy the emanated from its shores. In fall 2008 the Puntland Coasts Guard conducted two successful operations to free hijacked ships in their waters. In January 2009 newly elected President Farole, responding to the international spotlight on piracy, declared that

fighting piracy was to be a top priority for his administration. Despite this there has been no international support for PSS security services to interdict pirates ashore. NATO vessels routinely turn captured pirates over to the Puntland Coastguard but even this elicits concern in diplomatic circles about undermining the 'legitimate' government of Somalia⁵⁸.

The Puntland Intelligence Service is one of the most efficient intelligence services in the region⁵⁹. It has been criticized for human rights abuses and operating outside the law, provoking conflict with rival clans⁶⁰. In 2009 newly elected President Farole described the organization as being out of control and "a state within a state"⁶¹. As the premier counter terrorism force in the region they are frequently involved in combat with the al Shabaab insurgents covertly infiltrating Puntland from southern Somalia. The PIS reportedly receives funding and cooperates with Ethiopian and covertly with US intelligence services⁶².

Section 6: The Regional Politics of Independence

The African Union (AU) along with Somalia's neighbors have been cool to the idea of breaking up Somalia. It is likely that regional leaders prefer to maintain the current status of underdeveloped, weak and manageable regions.⁶³ The Transitional Federal Government enjoys support from the international community despite being incapable of controlling territory since coming to power in February 2009. With the exception of Eritrea's bloody secession from Ethiopia, African leadership has held to the idea that African nations must maintain colonial boundaries in order to avoid opening a Pandora's Box of ethnically based breakaway regions. This was a long-standing policy for the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as well as its successor in 2002 the African Union (AU). However in a 2005 fact-finding trip to Somaliland

the AU indicated that there may be some support to Somaliland's efforts at independence saying in its report that "A case should not be linked to the notion of 'opening a Pandora's box'" and "The lack of recognition ties the hands of the authorities and people of Somaliland, as they cannot effectively and sustainably transact with the outside to pursue the reconstruction and development goals"⁶⁴. However with 8,000 UN funded AU peacekeepers propping up the TFG, it is no surprise that the AU has not acted on the findings of its mission to Somaliland.

Ethiopia has been a keen supporter of both Somaliland and Puntland. In 2000 Ethiopia entered into an agreement with Somaliland for the use of Berbera port to lessen its dependence on the congested and expensive port of Djibouti⁶⁵. Ethiopia also supports both the PIS and Somaliland security services in the fight against Islamic extremists from Southern Somalia. In turn these services assist Ethiopia with its struggle against a long-standing ethnic Somali insurgency in its Eastern Ogden region. Nonetheless most feel Ethiopia would be unlikely to support independence as Addis Ababa prefers for Puntland and Somaliland to remain weak and easily controlled⁶⁶. Ironically Arab states such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt also have opposed independence, preferring to eventually re-establish a united Somalia as a counterweight to the Christian Ethiopia⁶⁷.

Djibouti maintains good relations with Somaliland despite their support for the TFG. In the past relations were strained as Djibouti saw the port of Berbera as an economic threat⁶⁸. Despite this relations are improving with brisk cross border trade and ministerial-level meetings in 2009 discussing further economic and security cooperation.

Section 7: Potential for US Engagement

Engagement with Somaliland and Puntland presents opportunities for the US to promote democracy and good governance as well as to discourage the spread Islamic extremism in the HOA. It also presents the opportunity for the US to expand its influence along over 500 miles of important coastline that is adjacent to critical shipping lanes into the Red Sea and across busy smuggling routes into the HOA region.

The US State Department maintains low-level relations and economic support with Puntland and Somaliland mostly through USAID. In 2008 the US Department of State (US DOS) conducted mid level visits to Somaliland and received President Dahir Rayale Kahin, and foreign minister, Abdillahi Mohamed Duale in Washington. While careful not to imply any diplomatic recognition the visits were a sign of recognition for Somaliland's democratic progress⁶⁹. Some in the DOS have openly advocated that the US recognize Somaliland. In 2006 retired US ambassador to Somalia Dan Simpson advocated recognition of Somaliland⁷⁰. The former ambassador to Ethiopia also urged the US to open a liaison office in Hargeysa⁷¹

US financial aid to Somalia is heavily concentrated in the troubled South. The 2010 USAID Somalia budget request totaled USD103million⁷². The request allocated 64% or USD67million towards funding the AU peacekeeping, most indirectly in the form of reimbursements to the AU for weapons provided to the TFG militia in Mogadishu. Of the remaining amount; 27% went towards general economic aid with only 2 % towards anti piracy/security/demining activities. In recent years Southern Somalia has received 85% of the aid provided by the US government with the remaining 15% divided between Puntland and Somaliland regions. If it chose to, the US could link further US assistance to the TFG to the TFG's recognition of Somaliland.

Were the US to aggressively back Somaliland and Puntland in their efforts at independence there are a variety of excellent areas for increased cooperation ranging from economic and humanitarian to security cooperation.

On the economic front; critical to both regions are veterinarian services. CJTF HOA routinely provides veterinarian services to its partner nations in the heavily pastoral regions in HOA⁷³. Considering the critical importance that livestock exports play to both Somaliland and Puntland and economic catastrophes caused by the Saudi embargos ostensive due to Rift Valley Fever; VETCAP operations could be well received on both sides of the Gulf of Aden.

There is no shortage of infrastructure critical improvements across the HOA. Past USAID funded projects have developed much needed infrastructure in Puntland and Somaliland. In particular the USAID Food for Roads projects has resulted in 1200km of roads and irrigation canals built in Northern Somalia⁷⁴. Such infrastructure projects improve the economy and assist in security access and influence into austere regions.

Maritime security is an ongoing problem throughout coastal Somalia. Piracy and smuggling are rampant from within Somalia as is illegal fishing and toxic waste dumping from abroad. Terrorist and weapons smuggling across the Gulf of Aden are of particular concern. In response, CJTF HOA has sponsored the Maritime Center of Excellence in Mombasa to train and facilitate cooperation between maritime security forces in the region. There are efforts underway with the TFG to establish a national Coast Guard and enroll students in this training. This formalized basic training paves the way for cooperation with USN and coalition vessels in the region.

NAVCENT is resigned to a long-term presence in the Gulf of Aden to deal with piracy and other criminal activity. In 2009 twenty nations within Combined Maritime Forces and NAVCENT established CTF-51 to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean. A particular shortfall in this fight is local knowledge and language skills among boarding parties that search the innumerable dhows and fishing skiffs in this critical waterway. Engagement with the Somaliland and Puntland Coast Guards could leverage their local knowledge with CTF-151 mobility assets. For example, in 2008 members of the Sierra Leone Coast guard embarked on the USN vessels in order to combat illegal fishing in that nation's exclusive economic zone. The Sierra Leon coastguardsmen backed by US surveillance assets and boarding teams boarded and searched numerous suspect vessels. They provided local knowledge and simplified legal issues associated with detainees⁷⁵.

Of greater importance is the counter-terrorist fight ashore inside Somalia. Since the 1998 US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, the US has considered Somalia an ungoverned haven for al Qaeda to destabilize the entire Horn of Africa. To counter this, after 9/11 the US established the Combined Joint Task Force-HOA (CJTF-HOA) at in Djibouti. CJTF HOA has conducted a range of activities including hosting strikes against al Qaeda leadership inside Somalia and Yemen and conducting humanitarian and mil-to mil operations throughout the region, excluding Somalia. While Somaliland and Puntland have maintained control of their territories, there have been increased terrorist attacks emanating from the south. Should the TFG collapse in the south the transient militias of al Shabaab would likely turn north and launch conventional and terrorist campaigns that could easily overwhelm the fragile security services in these regions.

Numerous opportunities exist for US security engagement ashore starting with intelligence cooperation with these regional intelligence services. With HUMINT being our main shortfall and technical intelligence collection being a significant shortfall for them, opportunities exist to collaborate in stopping the spread of Islamic militias into northern Somalia as well as disrupting the existing al Qaeda presence in the South. The US maintains adequate ISR and strike capability in the region to act on HUMINT cueing in order to target terrorist activity throughout Somalia.

While intelligence services are suited to combating terror attacks a conventional force will be required to prevent the spread of al Shabaab militias. Ports, beaches and airfields near both Berbera and Bosasso provide ample infrastructure for a MEU to conduct mil to mil engagement ashore instead of wasting away riding along on CTF-151 maritime patrols just offshore as they typically do now.

Section 8: Conclusions

Somaliland and Puntland are two glimmers of democracy that are both endangered of being dragged down into the misery of the south. Over the years the citizens of these regions have established enough faith in their governments to overcome clan rivalries and to become an oasis of Somali progress and a symbolic threat to militant Islamists around the region. Both regions seek to overcome the economic disadvantage imposed on them by diplomatic isolation. Both are receptive to engagement with the US and both occupy positions along critical economic lifelines for the west. The argument for the US to abandon the current policy of support to a unified Somalia and openly engage these northern regions is sound.

As a former British protectorate Somaliland has really never been part of Somalia. Its people are long divorced from their troubled cousins to the south. To force them to reintegrate would be impossible. The US should begin direct economic and military engagement and should build international support for recognition of Somaliland. Diplomatic pressure should be brought to bear on the AU to resolve Somaliland's status among its members.

Puntland seeks eventual reintegration with Somalia. Until then it wishes to function independently from the South. In order to prevent the near-term destabilization from the south, the US should begin direct economic and military engagement with Puntland while maintaining financial and diplomatic support to the African Union and the TFG in its efforts to stabilize the South.

South Somalia has been an ungoverned space for 19 years. Al Qaeda or their Somali associates have been active there throughout this time. With the recent emergence of the inter-clan al Shabaab militias, foreign terrorist facilitators can now operate there more freely than ever. Containing this threat is critical to the region. Shrinking their secure areas of operation and infiltrating their ranks with friendly Somali security services from the north will keep al Shabaab on the defensive and will hasten its collapse back into the din of clan warfare that is southern Somalia.

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